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SCENE

[THE TRACK BEHIND ODYSSEY MIDDLE SCHOOL. CURT AND OSCAR ARE RUNNING WITH MINIMAL EFFORT -- WALKING, REALLY. WE HEAR COACH JOE STUBBS OFF SOMEWHERE BLOWING HIS WHISTLE AND YELLING AT THE P.E. CLASS. ]

COACH STUBBS:

All right you bunch of wood gnomes,  
two more laps and in you go! Curt -  
- Oscar -- put a little hustle into  
it, will you?

CURT:

Yes, sir!

OSCAR:

Aye, aye!

CURT:

I hate this, Oscar. I really hate  
this.

OSCAR:

I know, I know.

CURT:

I mean, look at us. They make us  
run around and around on this track  
-- and for what? I'm not learning  
anything.

OSCAR:

My Dad says it's preparing us for  
life in the real world.

CURT:

Running in circles?

OSCAR:

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Yeah. That's what he says he does  
every day at work.

CURT:

Well, I don't like it. This track  
stuff is crazy. There's gotta be  
some way to get out of this.

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OSCAR:

Not again, Curt.

CURT:

What?

OSCAR:

You remember what happened all the other times you tried to get out of phys-ed.

CURT:

I don't know what you're talking about.

OSCAR:

Yeah, you do -- like the time you told the Coach you had a rare tropical disease and he sent you to the school nurse who sent you to the principal who sent you home to your parents who sent you to your room for a week?

CURT:

Yeah, yeah -- I should've used a different color magic marker for those spots.

OSCAR:

And the time you tried to get out of class because you said you were -- what did you say? -- "boycotting the geo-political racist factions who were undermining our democracy through fascist left-wing competitions"? Remember what happened?

CURT:

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Coach Stubbs washed my mouth out  
with soap. But that was only  
because he didn't know what fascist  
meant.

OSCAR:

Do you?

=====

CURT:

No, but it sounded good. (BEAT) All right -- so they didn't work out. There must be a full-proof way to get out of phys-ed.

OSCAR:

Oh, look!

CURT:

What?

OSCAR:

It's Lucy -- over there by the bleachers. (CALLING) Hi, Lucy!

[LUCY, AT A DISTANCE, CALLS BACK]

LUCY:

Hi, guys!

CURT:

Come on, let's go talk to her.

OSCAR:

But the Coach said to keep going.

CURT:

We'll jog in place, all right? Come on. (AS HE APPROACHES HER) Hey, Loose. Whatcha doing?

LUCY:

I'm working on an article for the Odyssey Owl.

OSCAR:

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(IMPRESSED) You're working for the  
school newspaper?

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LUCY:

(VERY SERIOUS) Yes. I'm doing a cover story on the litter under the bleachers. Have you seen down there? It's disgusting. The school newspaper wants me to get the scoop.

CURT:

You'll need a scoop for that litter -- especially since most of it is the school newspaper. When did you become a newspaper woman?

LUCY:

A couple of weeks ago. I like it. It's a lot of fun.

[WE HEAR STUBBS'S WHISTLE BLOW]

COACH STUBBS:

(CALLING) Curt! Oscar! How many pit stops are you gonna take? Get moving!

OSCAR:

(CALLING) Yes, sir! (TO CURT) Come on, Curt.

CURT:

I'm coming. (TO LUCY) Back to the rat race, Lucy. Have fun with your trash journalism.

LUCY:

Uh huh. (BEAT, REALIZING WHAT HE SAID) My what?

[CURT AND OSCAR RESUME THEIR RUNNING]

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CURT:

Now there's a great way to spend your time: writing articles about garbage under the school bleachers.

OSCAR:

I don't know. I think it might be fun to write for the school paper.

CURT:

Are you kidding? I can't think of anything more boring than sitting around a class with a bunch of pinheads writing about things like: the student reactions to the soda machine when it was out of order. Or the life-story of Leslie Spongebottom, leader of the overdue book collection in the library. Or the favorite food of Butch Nelson, captain of the basketball team. Who cares about Butch Nelson's favorite food -- or anybody's favorite food, for that matter?

OSCAR:

I liked the story about Leslie. Did you know she visited Mexico last summer? That's important.

CURT:

Oscar ... post cards of Mexican jumping beans in Tijuana is not news. A nuclear holocaust, the cure of a major disease, the time I saw Robyn get kissed by George Baldwin - now that's news. The Odyssey Owl is nothing but a ... a hoot.

OSCAR:

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Yeah ... I guess you're right. It's  
a waste of time. I wouldn't want to  
give up Phys-Ed for that.

CURT:

Yeah, we're -- (BEAT) Wait a minute.  
What do you mean?

OSCAR:

Mean about what?

CURT:

Giving up Phys-Ed. What's Phys-Ed  
got to do with the school newspaper?

OSCAR:

The school newspaper meets during  
Phys-Ed.

CURT:

It does? Since when?

OSCAR:

A couple of weeks ago. It's a new  
school program they're trying.

CURT:

(AN IDEA) Really!

OSCAR:

Uh oh...

CURT:

Oscar! You've given me an idea!

[MUSIC BRIDGES US TO THE NEXT SCENE]

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SCENE

[LATER. THE SCHOOL.]

COACH STUBBS:

So ... you got the school counselor  
to switch you into another class,  
huh?

CURT:

Yes sir -- all you have to do is  
sign there at the bottom of the  
form.

COACH STUBBS:

Uh huh. This isn't another one of  
those protests of yours, is it?

CURT:

No, sir. Oscar and I are going give  
up the endless fun of running track  
to pursue a higher calling. Right,  
Oscar?

OSCAR:

Huh? I thought we were gonna be  
reporters.

=====

COACH STUBBS:

(DOUBTFULLY) You two as reporters.  
I never woulda thought it.

CURT:

Yes! It's been a secret passion of  
mine for ... oh, hours, at least.

COACH STUBBS:

Hmmm. Well, okay ... (SIGNS THE  
FORM) I wouldn't wanna stand in the  
way of the Woodstein and Bernard of  
this next generation.

OSCAR:

Who?

CURT:

Thanks, Coach. I knew you'd  
understand.

COACH STUBBS:

Ah, Curt...

CURT:

Yes, sir?

COACH STUBBS:

If, by some remote chance, this is  
another one of your tricks to get  
out of Phys-Ed, you'll be running  
track for the rest of the year. You  
know that, right? I don't tolerate  
kids skipping out of my class.

OSCAR:

(GULP) The rest of the year?

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CURT:

Coach, don't worry. I've never been  
more sincere about anything in my  
whole life.

COACH STUBBS:

That's what I figured.

[MUSIC BRIDGES US TO THE NEXT SCENE]

SCENE

[THE NEXT DAY. THE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER MEETING. CURT AND OSCAR  
ENTER -- LUCY SEES THEM.]

LUCY:

Curt! Oscar!

OSCAR:

Hi, Lucy.

LUCY:

What are you doing here?

CURT:

This is the meeting room for the  
school paper, right?

LUCY:

Yes.

CURT:

We wanna become a couple of ace  
reporters. We're here to join the  
staff. We want to help you tackle  
the big issues in print. Corruption  
in the teacher's lounge, mis-use of  
the ditto machine, spitballs on the  
blackboards. All the hot topics.

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LUCY:

Really? I didn't know either of you  
could write.

OSCAR:

Write? Curt, you didn't say we had  
to do any --

CURT:

(CLEARING HIS THROAT LOUDLY) You  
never know what we might come up  
with, Lucy.

LUCY:

That's what I've heard.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

(ENTERING) All right, everyone.  
Let's get started. We have a lot to  
cover today.

LUCY:

Mrs. Medloff.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Yes, Lucy -- oh, excellent job on  
the litter article yesterday. I was  
quite pleased.

LUCY:

Thank you. Umm, I wanted to  
introduce you to Curt and Oscar ...

OSCAR:

Hi.

CURT:

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Hiya.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Curt and Oscar? (BEAT) Oh, yes ...  
you're the new transfers.

CURT:

We sure are!

MRS. MEDLOFF:

I need to talk to the school  
counselor about this. Have either  
of you any experience?

OSCAR:

To tell you the truth --

CURT:

We don't want to brag, Mrs. Medloff.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Oh, please do.

CURT:

Well, you remember that award-  
winning article in the Odyssey Times  
about embezzling at the Acmetron  
Corporation?

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Yes. You mean you -- ?

CURT:

That's right. I read it.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

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I see. How very impressive.  
Anything else?

CURT:

Well ... no.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

(DOUBTFULLY) Hmmm. We need  
experienced writers on the Owl's  
staff. People with talent.

OSCAR:

(MOANS) Track for the rest of the  
year.

CURT:

We have talent! In fact, just  
yesterday Coach Stubbs was calling  
us the Woodburn and Steinway of our  
generation.

LUCY:

Who?

OSCAR:

That's what I asked.

CURT:

Come on, Mrs. Medloff. Give us a  
chance. Where would any of the  
great writers be if someone didn't  
let them work on their school  
newspapers? Samuel Clemens never  
woulda met Mark Twain.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Curt --

CURT:

=====

Charles Dickenson would never have  
written classics like "David  
Coppertone" or, or "Olive Twister."

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Curt --

CURT:

William Shakespeare couldn't have  
penned those immortal words: "To be  
or not to be -- wherefore art thou?"  
or "Romeo, Romeo, let down your  
hair!"

OSCAR:

That was Rapunzel.

CURT:

It wasn't that bad.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Curt! (BEAT, SIGHS) I'll give you a  
chance. But only one.

CURT:

Great!

MRS. MEDLOFF:

If you promise to work hard, hand  
things in on time, and be  
responsible!

CURT:

Cross my heart and hope to run track  
for the rest of the year.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

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What?

CURT:

I promise.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Tell me one thing: what class did  
you sacrifice to be with us today?

CURT:

Physical education.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

(KNOWINGLY) I see. Well ... Welcome  
aboard. Have a seat. (TO ALL) Now,  
let's get down to business and divvy  
up some of these writing  
assignments. Janet -- Mr.  
Therringer just had a thyroid  
operation. I want to break the  
story on that.

CURT:

(SOTTO VOCE) That'll be a big  
seller.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Lucy, you should try to get a human  
interest angle on Phil Boudreau.

LUCY:

Phil Boudreau?

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Yes. He's the one who clinched the  
debate finals last week. Find out  
what it's like to be the state  
champ.

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CURT:

(SOTTO VOCE) I wonder what his  
favorite food is.

OSCAR:

(SOTTO VOCE) Quiet, Curt!

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Bill, I want you to cover the new  
policy about hairnets being worn in  
the cafeteria.

CURT:

Radiation suits would be better.

OSCAR:

Quiet, Curt!

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Hmmm ... and Curt and Oscar ... what  
am I going to do with you?

CURT:

Anything, Mrs. Medloff. We're here  
to serve.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Let's see which teacher is up for  
our weekly In-depth Profile.  
(CHECKS HER LIST) Well, that's  
timely. It's Coach Joe Stubbs.

CURT & OSCAR:

What?

MRS. MEDLOFF:

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Coach Stubbs. That should be a  
challenging start for the both of  
you.

CURT:

Ah ... Mrs. Medloff ... I think our  
talents would be better used on,  
say, environmental issues. That  
hairnet article, for example ...

MRS. MEDLOFF:

No ... Coach Stubbs. He just  
recently won an award.

CURT:

He did?

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Yes ... something to do with  
catching kids who try to get out of  
Phys-Ed class. (SHE CHUCKLES LOW  
AND KNOWINGLY.)

[BOTH OSCAR AND CURT LET LOOSE A VERY LOUD GULP.]

MRS. MEDLOFF:

I'll give you two days. I want it  
for next week's issue.

[MUSIC BRIDGES US TO THE NEXT SCENE]

SCENE

[THE GYMNASIUM AT ODYSSEY MIDDLE SCHOOL.]

OSCAR:

I don't feel very good about this,  
Curt.

CURT:

Relax, Oscar. It'll be a breeze.

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OSCAR:

But we don't know anything about interviewing people. We don't know how to write an article.

CURT:

This is newspaper writing -- what's to know? We ask him a bunch of questions and write out his answers, that's all. It's not like we have to know what we're doing.

OSCAR:

I hope you're right.

CURT:

Of course I'm right. You worry too much. (BEAT) Y'know, I think I'm beginning to enjoy this reporter stuff. I mean, it's kinda cool to sit down with someone face-to-face and get him to answer some hard-hitting questions. None of this "what's your favorite food?" junk. We could ask about some real important things. (BEAT) You did bring the questions, right?

OSCAR:

I thought you were asking the questions.

CURT:

(BEAT, MOANS) Oh, terrific.

OSCAR:

Nobody said I had to come up with the questions!

=====

CURT:

All right, all right, forget about it. We'll make some up. It can't be that hard. (BEAT) What about the the tape recorder -- is it working? We're going to need it.

OSCAR:

I checked it this morning. See?

[HE PLAYS A BIT OF TAPE...]

OSCAR:

(ON TAPE) Testing one, two, three ... (HE BLOWS INTO THE MIKE) Testing ... (BEGINS SINGING) Testing, testing. "Oh when the saints, come marching in, oh when the saints come marching in ...

CURT:

(LIVE) Okay, Oscar, you can turn it off now.

OSCAR:

(ON TAPE) Oh, I want to be with that number number number when the -- "  
(TURNS TAPE OFF, SPEAKS LIVE) Sorry.

CURT:

I didn't know you liked to sing.

OSCAR:

(MODESTLY) Oh ... well ... a little. I do "Michael Row The Boat Ashore" later on the tape -- do you wanna hear it?

CURT:

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Maybe some other time. After I've  
had my ear drums removed, for  
instance.

[THE COACH ENTERS]

COACH STUBBS:

Well, well, well. If it isn't our  
school's newest star reporters. You  
wanna get an interview, I  
understand.

CURT:

Yes, sir. You're this week's lucky  
victim -- er, subject.

COACH STUBBS:

Good. It'll be interesting to see  
you in action. Y'know, to find out  
if you're good at this stuff or just  
skipping out of Phys-Ed class. (You  
do remember what I told you  
yesterday.)

OSCAR:

I think I need to be excused.

CURT:

Sit down, Oscar. Why don't you turn  
the tape recorder on?

OSCAR:

Okay. (HE DOES)

COACH STUBBS:

I expect you'll have some deep,  
probing questions for me -- being an  
in-depth profile and all that.

CURT:

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Yeah ... deep and probing.

COACH STUBBS:

Then fire away. Ask me anything.

CURT:

Yeah ... ask you anything. (TRYING  
TO MAKE SOMETHING UP) Ah ... well  
... you see ...

=====

COACH STUBBS:

Come on, I don't have all day. Are  
you reporters or not?  
(SUSPICIOUSLY) Or didn't you prepare  
for this interview?

CURT:

We're prepared! It's just that ...  
I think what our readers really want  
to know is ... ah ... (AN IDEA) What  
is your favorite food?

COACH STUBBS:

Huh?

[MUSIC BRIDGES US TO THE NEXT SCENE]

SCENE

[LATER. SOMEWHERE IN THE SCHOOL WHERE CURT AND OSCAR CAN TALK  
FREELY.]

CURT:

See, Oscar? I told you: no  
problems. A few questions, type out  
the answers and -- bingo -- an  
award-winning article for the  
Odyssey Owl. And no more running  
our legs off in Phys-Ed, either!

OSCAR:

Do you think anybody really cares  
about his collection of famous sweat  
socks from the sixties?

CURT:

Sure they will! Look, this  
article'll give everyone a behind-  
the-scenes look at Coach Stubbs --  
the man. And when they read about  
the duck noises he can make with his

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forearm -- they'll go crazy! Come  
on, let's listen to the tape and get  
this thing written up!

OSCAR:

Okey-dokey. (HE PUSHES THE BUTTON  
ON THE PLAYER) This should be it.

[YES, IT SHOULD BE IT, BUT INSTEAD WE HEAR OSCAR PERFORMING  
"WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN" FROM EARLIER.]

CURT:

Oscar?

OSCAR:

Ah -- maybe it's later on the tape.  
I'll fast-forward it. (HE DOES)  
Here...

[NOW WE HEAR OSCAR SINGING "MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE."]

CURT:

Oscar! What is this?

OSCAR:

I don't know! I must've pushed the  
wrong button!

CURT:

You mean ... we don't have the  
interview?

OSCAR:

I ... I guess not.

CURT:

But if there's no interview, we have  
no article ... What are we gonna  
do?!?!]

=====

[MUSIC BRIDGES US TO THE COMMERCIAL]

[COMMERCIAL BREAK]

SCENE

[CURT'S HOUSE. THE FIRST THING WE HEAR IS UNRHYTHMIC TYPING.]

CURT:

(PRESSURED) All right, all right,  
we've been at this for hours. Where  
were we? Read what you've typed.

OSCAR:

From the beginning?

CURT:

Yeah.

OSCAR:

Coach Joe Stubbs: An In-depth  
Profile.

[PAUSE/ BEAT]

CURT:

And?

OSCAR:

And that's it.

CURT:

Come on, Oscar! We have to be able  
to remember something he said!

OSCAR:

All I remember is the sweat sock  
collection and the duck noises!

=====

CURT:

That won't fill an article. Listen,  
you pushed the wrong button on the  
tape player, you come up with  
something about Coach Stubbs!

OSCAR:

But I don't know anything else!

CURT:

Then ... then maybe we should try  
making it up.

OSCAR:

What?!?

CURT:

It's what most reporters do anyway!  
If they don't know it, they make it  
up! That's the unwritten law of  
journalism! Haven't you ever read  
the newspaper?

OSCAR:

Only the comics.

=====

CURT:

There you are. Those are as close  
to real life as we need to get.

OSCAR:

But, Curt -- Coach Stubbs will know  
we made it up.

CURT:

So? It's journalistic license!  
It's what everyone expects when  
they've been interviewed.

OSCAR:

I don't believe you.

CURT:

Neither do I. You come up with an  
idea!

OSCAR:

Let's just admit that we don't know  
what we're doing.

CURT:

Are you crazy?

OSCAR:

We'll say that we did it to get out  
of Phys-Ed. That's all.

CURT:

Oscar, do you know what you're  
saying? Coach Stubbs will make us  
run track for the rest of the year!  
Our bodies will turn into a giant  
cramped, athlete's foot!

=====

OSCAR:

It's gotta be better than this. I  
don't know why I let you talk me  
into it.

=====

CURT:

Listen, Oscar. You can't chicken  
out on me now. We have to write an  
article -- one way or the other! We  
have to!

[MUSIC BRIDGES US TO THE NEXT SCENE]

SCENE

[THE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER MEETING, THE NEXT DAY. THE MEETING IS  
ABOUT TO BE ADJOURNED.]

MRS. MEDLOFF:

All right, gang. Those are your  
article assignments. See you  
tomorrow.

[WE HEAR THE CLASS BEGIN TO LEAVE]

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Oh, Curt and Oscar. May I have a  
word with you, please? Here at my  
desk.

[THE CLASS CONTINUES TO DEPART AS CURT AND OSCAR APPROACH MRS.  
MEDLOFF'S DESK.]

CURT:

Yes, Mrs. Medloff.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

I read your article last night. The  
"In-Depth Profile Of Coach Joe  
Stubbs." When I finished, I realized  
I had made two terrible mistakes.

CURT:

Really?

MRS. MEDLOFF:

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Yes. First, I read the article  
while I was eating.

CURT:

Oh. And the second?

MRS. MEDLOFF:

That I asked you to write it.

CURT:

That good, huh?

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Good, Curt? Good wasn't the word  
that sprung to my lips. I mean, it  
was one thing to write that Coach  
Stubbs was born on a gypsy tuna  
barge in the middle of the Persian  
Gulf, but you went a little too far  
with that story about him being  
raised by a family of Sumo wrestlers  
in Okinawa.

OSCAR:

See? I told you the Sumo wrestler  
thing wouldn't work!

CURT:

Quiet, Oscar.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Now, for once, why don't you tell me  
the truth? You don't really know  
anything about writing for a  
newspaper, do you?

OSCAR:

No, ma'am.

=====

CURT:

My work speaks for itself.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

It sure does. You just did this to  
get out of your Phys-Ed class,  
didn't you?

OSCAR:

Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Curt?

CURT:

It seemed like a good idea at the  
time. I guess journalism isn't as  
easy as I thought.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

That's not the only thing that won't  
be so easy. First, I've arranged a  
little interview with the Principal.  
And, as I understand it, he's  
arranged a little interview with  
your parents. But neither one will  
be written up in the Odyssey Owl, if  
you know what I mean.

CURT:

I'm afraid I do.

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Y'know, Curt, the article was almost  
believable until you got to the part  
about his collection of sweat socks  
and his duck noises. Then I knew  
you were making it up.

=====

CURT:

Well, to be honest ...

MRS. MEDLOFF:

Yes, Curt?

CURT:

Forget it. You'd never believe me.

[MUSIC BRIDGES US TO THE NEXT SCENE]

SCENE

[THE TRACK BEHIND ODYSSEY MIDDLE SCHOOL. CURT AND OSCAR ARE RUNNING. WE HEAR JOE STUBBS OFF SOMEWHERE BLOWING HIS WHISTLE AND YELLING AT THE P.E. CLASS. THIS SHOULD PLAY OUT LIKE THE FIRST SCENE.]

COACH STUBBS:

All right you bunch of gumdrops, two more laps and in you go! Curt -- Oscar -- put a little effort into it, will you?

CURT:

We're coming!

=====

COACH STUBBS:

So's Christmas -- but I don't have  
that long.

CURT:

Yes, sir!

OSCAR:

Aye, aye!

CURT:

Did I happen to mention that I hate  
this, Oscar?

OSCAR:

I don't wanna hear about it.

CURT:

I'm so tired -- all I wanna do is  
sit down.

OSCAR:

I can't sit down. Not after my Dad  
got finished with me.

CURT:

You, too, huh? Well, we'll know  
better next time.

OSCAR:

We!! What do you mean "we,"  
kimosabe? Don't you ever include me  
in one of your tricks again!

CURT:

=====

You wouldn't be complaining if it  
got us out of P.E.

OSCAR:

Yes, I would. It's wrong to lie to  
people to get out of work. I hope  
you learned your lesson.

=====

CURT:

(BEAT) Look, there's Lucy.

OSCAR:

No, Curt, we can't! Not again!

CURT:

Hey, Lucy! Wait up!

[LUCY, AT A DISTANCE, CALLS BACK]

LUCY:

Go away!

CURT:

(AS HE APPROACHES HER) Hey, Loose.  
Whatcha doing?

LUCY:

I'm here to write the profile about  
Coach Stubbs that you didn't write.  
Now go away -- you guys are trouble.

[WE HEAR STUBBS'S WHISTLE BLOW]

COACH STUBBS:

(CALLING) Curt! Oscar! Are you  
tryin' to win some kind of last  
place award? Get moving!

OSCAR:

(CALLING) Yes, sir! (TO CURT) Come  
on, Curt.

[MUSIC BRIDGE BEGINS]

CURT:

=====

I'm coming. (TO LUCY) Lucy -- a quick piece of advice: if he tells you about his sweat sock collection and duck noises, don't put it in the article.

LUCY:

What?

CURT:

(OFF) See ya.

LUCY:

(CALLING) Curt! Sweat socks and duck what? Curt, come back here!

[MUSIC BRIDGES US TO THE END.]